

Amendment to the Specification

Please replace paragraph 63 on pages 21 and 22 of the originally filed specification with the following marked up paragraph:

--The output of range mask and the select unit 301 is coupled to the inputs of index resolution functions unit 302. In one embodiment, index resolution functions unit 302 includes one or more functions that are performed on the outputs of range mask and select unit 301. For example, as shown, the sorter includes an ascending priority encoder 302A to find the first occurrence (with respect to the top of the search array) of a match between the specified pattern of N bytes and the content data in the search array as indicated by the non-masked match lines. A descending priority encoder 302B may also be included to find the last occurrence (with respect to the top of the search array) of a match between the N byte pattern and the content data in the search array as indicated by the non-masked match lines. A population counter 302C indicates the number of matches that occur between the N byte pattern and the data in the search array as indicated by the non-masked match lines. Other index selectors 302Z may also be used. --